(ख) 1.4.98 से 31.10.98 तक कुल 610 नए स्थानों में एस० टी० डी० सुविधा प्रदान कर दी गई है।

(ग) और (घ) टी० आर० ए० आई० अधिनियम, 1997 के अधीन गठित भारतीय दूरसंचार नियामक प्राधिकरण को दूरसंचार सेवाओं की दरें निर्धारित करने की शक्ति प्राप्त है। प्राधिकरण ने दूरसंचार टैरिफ पर एक परामर्श दस्तावेज निकाला है जिसमें अन्य बातों के साथ-साथ लम्बी दूरी की कॉल प्रभारों में कमी करने का भी प्रस्ताव है। टैरिफ ढाँचों को अंतिम रूप देने से पूर्व टी० आर० ए० आई० ने सेवा प्रदाताओं, उपभोक्ता संगठनों तथा आम जनता से परामर्श लेने की प्रक्रिया शुरू कर दी है ताकि इस बारे में उनके विचार सुनिश्चित किए जा सकें। टी० आर० ए० आई० द्वारा अधिसूचित किए जाने वाले टैरिफ पर निर्णय लेने की समय-सीमा परामर्श प्रक्रिया पर निर्भर करती है।

Modernisation of Post Offices

529. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to modernise and improve certain post offices in the capital;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the idea behind improving the post offices of the capital only?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Modernisation of Post Offices has been taken up as a part of the plan activities of the Department since the 8th Five Year Plan to enhance working ambience and ergonomics of the post offices all over the country for greater customer satisfaction and to increase productivity of the employees. Accordingly, for the current financial year, 8 post offices of Delhi Circle have been identified for modernisation and 52 post offices in other parts of the country.

Licences to Private Internet Companies

530. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently decided to give licences to private internet companies, if so, the terms and conditions thereof;

(b) the names of treating private companies presently operating in the company and rules governing their operation;

(c) whether it is a fact that the private companies are not satisfied with VSNL MTNL functioning and have in fact requested for satellite use directly, if so, the reaction of Government on their request; and

(d) what would be the implications of direct use of satellite by such companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Yes, Sir. A synopsis of the terms and conditions is given in the Statement-I (*See* below).

(b) The new Internet Policy has been announced on 6th November, 1998. Till date 19 licences have been issued to private companies. A list of these companies is given in Statement-II (*See* below). M/s. Satyam Infoway who were given a licence on 12th November, 98 have launched their services at Hyderabad on 22.11.98. Many other companies plan to do so in the near future. The synopsis of the terms and conditions of their operations are Statement-III (*See* below).

(c) and (d) No, Sir. No request has been received from any of the ISPs for direct use of satellite circuits. However, any proposal received from them will be examined in the light of Satcom Policy and also of interference with other agencies using the same frequency spectrum for communication, broadcast etc.

Statement-I

Synopsis of Terms and Conditions—ISP

(a) Any Indian company with a maximum foreign equity of 49% is eligible.